

## The greeting 'Rek' as an identity marker of "Komunitas Suroboyoan" on platform X

Nur Azizah Hitakumala 

Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Airlangga, Jl. Dharmawangsa Dalam Selatan, Surabaya 60286, Jawa Timur, Indonesia  
e-mail: hitakumalanurazizah@gmail.com

*Received 23 November 2025*

*Revised 29 December 2025*

*Accepted 30 December 2025*

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine how the greeting "rek" is used in the digital interactions of the Suroboyoan community on platform X and how this greeting marks and represents the identity of arek Suroboyo. Using a qualitative approach and communication ethnography methods, data was collected through tweet documentation and an online survey of 11 respondents. The analysis shows that "rek" is used in various forms, such as greetings, invitations, emotional expressions, and jokes, reflecting the informal and egalitarian communication style typical of Surabaya. The survey findings indicate that the majority of respondents consider "rek" a very distinctive greeting that is still relevant for use by the younger generation and functions as a marker of local identity. Through indexicality theory, "rek" is understood as a linguistic symbol that indexes social membership, cultural closeness, and a sense of community togetherness. Therefore, the greeting "rek" serves not only as a form of linguistic expression but also as a representation of social and cultural identity that is alive and developing in the digital communication practices of Surabaya's younger generation.

**Keywords:** rek, local identity, digital community, communication ethnography, indexicality

**priviet lab.**  
RESEARCH & PUBLISHING



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has revolutionized human communication, including the expression of cultural and local identities. Social media platforms like Twitter, now known as Platform X, have become virtual interaction spaces that are not only global and inclusive but also reinforce communication practices that reflect users' local identities (Yolanda et al., 2025). Amidst the rapid, uniform, and often globally standardized flow of information, an interesting phenomenon has emerged: online communities that use social media to maintain and celebrate their cultural distinctiveness (Arya, 2024). These communities not only interact socially but also form shared narratives about who they are, where they come from, and how they want to be recognized culturally. One concrete example of this phenomenon is the Suroboyoan Community, a digital community informally formed on Platform X and comprising users with ties to the city of Surabaya. This community uses a variety of distinctive Suroboyoan expressions, including language styles, greetings, local humor, and references to Surabaya's urban culture in their daily interactions. In this community, language practices are more than just a means of communication; they serve as a representation of group identity (Alfian et al., 2025).

Social media provides a dynamic space for individuals to find groups with shared interests, internalize societal norms, and strengthen their solidarity through symbols and collective activities. Indonesia's collectivist culture influences the formation of social identity, reflected in the integration of local values, such as the use of regional languages and cultural symbols in online interactions (Yang & Fatimah, 2024). Through the use of distinctive linguistic elements, community members not only mark their cultural affiliation but also strengthen a sense of togetherness and solidarity as members of the "arek Suroboyo." Thus, the Suroboyoan Community serves as an example of how local identity can be articulated and reconstructed dynamically and contextually in digital spaces.

To understand the use of the greeting "rek" as an identity marker in the Suroboyoan digital community, this study employs the communication ethnography approach introduced by Hymes (1972). This approach emphasizes that language must be analyzed within the social and cultural context in which it is used, not simply as a symbolic system. In the digital context, the use of the greeting "rek" not only reflects a linguistic form unique to Surabaya but also acts as a marker of social identity that can be analyzed using Silverstein's (1976) concept of indexicality. This concept explains how certain linguistic forms carry social meanings that point to a particular identity, group membership, or social position within a given culture. In the digital space, linguistic signs such as "rek" can become indexes that directly link their speakers to the identity of "arek Suroboyo." By combining the framework of communication ethnography and the concept of indexicality, this study seeks to uncover how simple forms of greeting can play a key role in shaping and affirming cultural identity in online interactions.

The shift of social interaction to online spaces has given local linguistic signs new meaning as indexical markers, that is, as immediate markers that link users to specific cultural origins. In communication ethnography, certain language forms, including greeting particles, can function as symbols of community membership when staged in a highly open digital setting that remains rich in the local context (Doreleijers & Swanenberg, 2023). Within this framework, the greeting "rek" is typical of Arek Suroboyo and should be understood as a similar semiotic strategy that "indexes" Suroboyoan membership to digital audiences across regions. Varghese and Ranganathan (2022) state that online discourse research emphasizes the need for digital ethnography so that language analysis cannot be separated from the socio-cultural context that surrounds it. By combining participant observation, tweet documentation, and community surveys, researchers can read the greeting "rek" not merely as a lexical token, but as a social practice that produces, negotiates, and distributes the identity of "arek Suroboyo" on Platform X. This approach will be used in this research to map the form, function, and cultural meaning of the greeting "rek" in the Suroboyoan digital community.

Previous studies have shown that social media is a crucial arena for the formation of collective identity through the linguistic practices of digital communities. Rosyadi (2024) revealed that in WhatsApp communities, linguistic interactions not only represent daily communication but also digitally shape social cohesion and group norms. Rani (2025) research on the political community "Anak Abah" on Twitter

reinforces these findings, highlighting how symbols, language styles, and pop culture references are used to create a cohesive and ideological group identity. A similar finding was found in [Malik and Haidar's \(2023\)](#) study of K-pop fandom communities on Twitter, where the community's distinctive style of interaction and linguistic expression serve as markers of social solidarity and mechanisms of digital affiliation.

In contrast, studies that emphasize local linguistic and cultural dimensions demonstrate that regional languages have renewed vitality in the digital space. [Mei \(2024\)](#), through a study of dialect-loving communities on new media like WeChat and Bilibili, and [Doreleijers & Swanenberg \(2023\)](#) through an analysis of local dialects on TikTok, both show that local language elements are often used to emphasize community identity and closeness in digital spaces. Meanwhile, [Nurwahid et al. \(2024\)](#) discuss how the Suroboyoan language is commodified in digital media and local television as a powerful cultural marker that is also prone to stereotyping. Although these studies underscore the importance of local languages in the formation of digital identities, none have specifically examined the use of local greetings such as "rek" in regional digital communities like the Suroboyoan community on Twitter. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap through the communication ethnography approach by Dell Hymes and indexicality by Silverstein to understand how the greeting "rek" is used as a sign of membership, social closeness, and cultural identity in the digital realm.

Although the six previous studies generally emphasize the importance of linguistic practices in building digital community identity, whether in the context of fandom, politics, or local dialects, no research has specifically examined a form of local greeting, such as "rek" as a marker of linguistic identity in region-based online communities. Most of these studies highlight the dynamics of digital communities at the macro level, such as the use of dialects in general, the construction of group identities, or symbols of popular culture. None of them deeply connects the function of micro greetings with ethnographic models of communication and the concept of indexicality in the context of regional communities such as the Suroboyoan Community on platform X. Therefore, this study fills this gap by examining "rek" as a form of social particle that contains the meaning of cultural identity, and mapping the context of its use in the digital interactions of Arek Suroboyo through an anthropological linguistic approach. Thus, this study aims to reveal how the form of the greeting 'rek' is used and in what communication context it appears in the digital interactions of the Suroboyoan community on platform X. And how the greeting 'rek' marks and represents the identity of Arek Suroboyo in the digital communication of the community.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Communication Ethnography**

Communication ethnography is an approach in linguistic anthropology developed by [Hymes \(1972\)](#) in response to the structuralist approach, which emphasizes language form independent of the context in which it is used. Hymes believes that language cannot be separated from its surrounding social and cultural functions, therefore it needs to be analyzed within the framework of "language as social action." In this approach, language is seen as a social practice rooted in real communication situations and is interconnected with the norms, values, and social structures of society ([Nevins, 2020](#)). The primary analytical framework in communication ethnography is the SPEAKING model, an acronym for Setting & Scene, Participants, Ends, Act Sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genre. This model allows researchers to map not only the form of speech but also the social context, participants, goals, and the communication medium used. In the context of the Suroboyoan community on Platform X, the use of the greeting "rek" can be analyzed using this model to uncover the situations, styles, and cultural norms underlying its use. For example, who uses "rek," to whom it is addressed, in the context of a joke, a greeting, or an expression of digital solidarity ([Hymes 1972](#)).

### **2.2. Indexicality**

[Silverstein \(1976\)](#) introduced the concept of indexicality to explain how certain linguistic elements can indirectly refer to social meanings or group identities. In this theory, linguistic forms such as greetings,

dialects, or speaking styles not only convey the content of a message but also function as signs (indexes) indicating social attributes such as ethnic affiliation, class, gender, and community membership. The greeting "rek" in the context of the Suroboyoan community functions as an index of locality and solidarity, a sign that directly connects users to the identity of "arek Suroboyo."

In digital spaces such as Twitter (Platform X), this indexical function becomes even more prominent because every form of linguistic expression takes place in the public sphere and often becomes a performance of identity. Silverstein (1976) emphasized that digital linguistic practices create indexical fields that reinforce the role of language in shaping users' social self-images. In this context, "rek" functions not only as a form of greeting but also as an interactive symbol that strengthens membership and cultural closeness among members of the digital community.

### **2.3. Previous Research**

Previous research has largely highlighted digital communities as spaces for identity formation through linguistic practices. A study by Rosyadi (2024) focused on the structure and dynamics of online communities and examined the dynamics of educational communities in WhatsApp groups using a digital ethnography approach. This study demonstrated that the structure of interactions, shared goals, and member diversity significantly influenced the formation of subcommunities and collaboration patterns. Interactions within these groups demonstrate WhatsApp's role as an inclusive, collaborative medium, particularly in disseminating educational information and support. A similar approach, but with a different context, is found in Rani (2025) study of the virtual community "Anak Abah" on Platform X (formerly Twitter). This study highlights how digital interactions are used as a means of political campaigning, where popular culture, such as the K-pop fandom, becomes a tactical tool to attract young audiences. The use of "quote tweets," "Spaces," and "merchandise" as part of the communication strategy confirms that social media is not only a space for political communication but also a space for negotiating cultural identities among young people.

Meanwhile, Malik and Haidar (2020), in their study of the K-pop stan community on Twitter, adopted the concept of a community of practice to explain how active participation and social interaction shape a sense of belonging within a digital community. While focusing on fandom, this study asserts that digital engagement can go beyond mere entertainment to become a discursive practice that shapes solidarity and community structure. Dialect research has also been a significant focus, particularly in relation to local identity and digital cultural practices. Mei (2024) examined dialect fan communities on WeChat and Bilibili, demonstrating that young people play a significant role in the transmission of dialects through digital content production.

Similarly, Doreleijers and Swanenberg (2023) explored the processes of enregisterment and indexicality through a Brabant dialect-based TikTok challenge in the Netherlands. They demonstrated that practices such as lip-syncing, remixing, and the use of TikTok's distinctive features serve as a means of negotiating regional identity in an often parodic yet emotionally charged context. This illustrates the role of social media as a dialectical space between local culture and mediated pop culture. In Indonesia, Nurwahid et al. (2024) revealed how the Suroboyoan language was commodified by the local media outlet JTV in its program *Pojok Kampung*. Originally associated with the lower classes, the dialect was strategically utilized to engage audiences and build media identity. However, this also resulted in stereotypical consequences and the commercialization of local culture, demonstrating that the media plays a role in redefining cultural meaning through content production practices.

Therefore, there is a gap in previous studies regarding how a local form of address can function as a marker of social identity in online communication. This research fills this gap by analyzing the use of the greeting "rek" within the Suroboyoan community on Platform X, using a communication ethnography approach (Dell Hymes) to read the context of the speech and indexicality theory (Michael Silverstein) to understand how the address indexes the social and cultural identity of Arek Suroboyo in the digital space.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Research Approach

This research uses a qualitative approach using the communication ethnography method, as developed by Hymes (1972), to explore the linguistic practices and social meanings behind the use of the greeting "rek" in digital communities. Communication ethnography allows researchers to analyze language within a social and cultural context and understand how it is used to shape group identity. Furthermore, Silverstein's (1976) theory of indexicality is used as a lens to understand how the greeting "rek" functions as a marker of local identity in online interactions.

#### 3.2. Research Location and Subjects

This research was conducted in the digital community "Komunitas Suroboyoan" (Suroboyoan Community), active on platform X. This community was chosen because of its consistent use of Surabayan language elements, particularly the greeting "rek," in tweets and interactions between members. The research subjects were user accounts that actively engaged in conversations using this greeting (Figure 1).



Figure 1. User accounts that actively engaged in conversations using this greeting

#### 3.3. Data and Data Sources

The data in this study consist of digital utterances, namely tweet snippets containing the greeting "rek" from Suroboyoan Community accounts. The data also includes survey results as supporting data. The data sources are Suroboyoan Community users on platform X (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Suroboyoan Community users on platform X**

### **3.4. Data Collection Techniques**

Data collection was conducted through: (1) Digital observation of relevant community accounts; (2) Documentation of tweets containing the greeting "rek" (saved as screenshots and text archives); (3) An online survey distributed within the Suroboyoan Community on platform X.

Data collection in this study was conducted by combining three complementary primary techniques. First, intensive digital observation was conducted on accounts within the Suroboyoan Community on platform X to identify linguistic practices that consistently use the greeting "rek" in public interactions. Second, documentation was conducted by saving tweets, replies, and conversations containing the greeting in the form of screenshots and text archives for further analysis. Third, an online survey was distributed to community members through relevant interaction channels, aiming to explore user perceptions of the meaning, function, and context of the greeting "rek" in everyday digital communication. The combination of these three techniques aims to obtain rich and authentic data to understand the form and function of the greeting "rek" in the social context of local-based online communities.

### **3.5. Data Analysis Techniques**

The data was analyzed using two frameworks. First, Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model to identify the speech context (Setting, Participants, Ends, Act sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, Genre). Second, Silverstein's concept of indexicality to reveal how the greeting "rek" indexes social membership and identity.

The analysis was conducted in stages of identifying the forms of "rek" use, categorizing its social context, and interpreting its social meaning & identity index.

The combined approach of the SPEAKING model and the concept of indexicality allows researchers to not only describe how the greeting "rek" is used linguistically but also interpret the social values and identities constructed in the communicative practices of the Suroboyoan community on social media. By analyzing the forms and contexts of "rek" use through the SPEAKING dimension, researchers can understand its pragmatic function in specific situations. Meanwhile, the indexicality framework helps reveal how these greetings indirectly mark (index) social ties, group familiarity, and the user's local identity position within the digital community. This approach emphasizes the importance of the relationship between speech structures and social meanings formed in everyday, culture-based interactions.

**4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents the research results from the analysis of data collected from the online community 'Komunitas Suroboyoan' on platform X, using a linguistic anthropological approach. The analysis focuses on the everyday language practices used by community members in digital interactions, particularly the use of local greetings such as "rek" as a symbolic representation of cultural identity. Through Hymes' SPEAKING model, the speech context is thoroughly examined to understand how interactions shape social meaning in communication. In addition, Silverstein's concept of indexicality is used to explore how certain language elements implicitly index social membership, emotional closeness, and cultural values typical of Suroboyoan (Table 1-3 and Figure 3).

**Table 1. Data on the Suroboyoan Community**

Data	Account	Date	Quotation
1	@at2****	03/06/25	<i>"cara sholat di kereta dari stasiun wonokromo gmn ya? takut gak bisa dhuburan rek 😞"</i>
2	@rh***	30/05/25	<i>"Hallo rekkk yuk yang mau barter kuesioner bisa reply nanti aku dm duluan! Syaratnya cuma mahasiswa aktif yang berkuliah di surabaya yaa."</i>
3	@stro*****	08/05/25	<i>"info cafe buat skripsian daerah sbj timur dong rek"</i>
4	@jurnal*****	07/05/25	<i>"halo rek, pls bantu aku lulus dengan mengisi kuesioner penelitianku rek. ada hadiah 25k untuk 20 responden sg beruntung. syarate nanti tak dm."</i>
5	@trs*****	07/05/25	<i>"hallo rek ada yang minat buat isiin kuesioner ku gak yaa, masih butuh 30 an lagi. kriterianya: dom surabaya - penonton drama koreaa..."</i>
6	@poo*****	04/05/25	<i>"halo rek! aku masih butuh banyak responden hwaaa... kriteriaku: 1. mahasiswa aktif yang berkuliah di Surabaya 2. berusia 17-25. boleh reply atau barter yaa!"</i>

7	@pen*****	02/05/25	"haloo rek, adakah info jam buka dan barga masuk nde kolam renang Unesa? spill dong, makasi"
8	@ecc*****	24/04/25	"Rek aku sama temenku mau liburan ke surabaya, terus kita mau pergi ke museum kapal selam, ada yang tau range tiket masuknya kesana berapaan?"
9	@muh*****	24/04/25	"Halo rek, ada yang lagi cari pekerjaan kab, ada info loker buat guru sd. Reply ya buat info lengkapnya 🙏"
10	@swe*****	23/04/25	"Halo, rek. Maaf numpang tanya, barangkali ada yg pernah naik bus dari Sby ke Batu, itu bisa lgsg dr bungur ke terminal batu gak ya?"
11	@jang*****	22/04/25	rekkk, ada yang bisa jastip makanan gitu gakk area surabayaa (sukolilo-rungkut) #zonajajan #zonauang
12	@woo*****	28/05/25	Rekk info part time di Surabaya dongg yg mulai kerja jam 6 sorean
13	@reb*****	22/05/25	rek minta saran dong. aku barusan lamar kerja. udah hampir tahap akhir & dijelasin terkait kontrak secara garis besarnya + dikasih tau offering letternya, tp ternyata tahan ijazah selama kerja kontrak. mending coba training dulu apa lgsg run?
14	@Ct*****	22/05/25	Rek infoin loker buat fres gradu smk dongg
15	@stro*****	21/05/25	rek, info tempat matcha yang enak dong!
16	@cad*****	20/05/25	rekk adakah besok yg mau ke job fair sby? mau cari barengan ehehe 🤔👉
17	@rua*****	20/05/25	Ga ada yang mau mutualan ta rek? Akun baru hehe
18	@spi*****	20/05/25	Rek lek dari darmu ke bungur isok naik surabaya bus ta?
19	@ana*****	19/05/25	rek info penginapan cidek royal sg perhari under 200k
20	@dou*****	19/05/25	halo rek ada ngga ya tempat makan atau cafe yang bisa request, karyawannya ngucapin happy birthday kek di mcd? (kecuali mcd ya) makasihh
21	@jus*****	15/05/25	halo rek, info dong barangkali ada loker host live tiktok yg jualan gitu. yg jam kerjanya fleksibel, BU banget butuh kerja sampingan
22	@muh*****	13/05/25	Rek, ada yang tahu jual emas batangan tapi gaada sertifnya dengan harga yang tinggi? *Btw dapet rewards dari perusahaan
23	@say*****	12/05/25	Haloo rek, ada yg pernah beli kosmetik di SOCIOLLA Kota Surabaya nggakk? Terutama yang di Royal Plaza, boleh minta tolong isi survei penelitianku nggaa yaa?
24	@jua*****	12/05/25	rek mau tanya, tempat beli raket tenis di surabaya dimana ya? tolong info anak rantau ini 🙏
25	@she*****	08/05/25	halo rek! info proyek gedung di surabaya yang masih progres pembangunan dongg

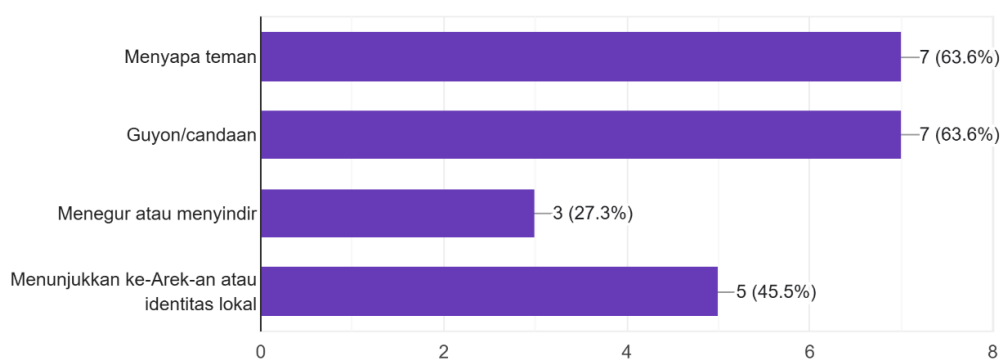
**Table 2. Survey Results in the Suroboyoan Community**

Category	Subcategory	Number
Status	Yes, have lived in Surabaya	5
	Yes, native resident of Surabaya	4
	No	2
Age Range	21–30 years old	11



<b>Gender</b>	Female	9
	Male	2
<b>Frequency of Using "rek"</b>	Yes, frequently	8
	Occasionally	3
<b>Perception of the Uniqueness of "rek"</b>	Very unique / very characteristic	8
	Unique / characteristic	3

Dalam konteks apa biasanya Anda menggunakan sapaan "rek"? (bisa pilih lebih dari satu)  
11 responses



**Figure 3. Context of Use of the Word 'Rek**

Table 3. Perceptions Related to the Use of the Word “Rek” based on Survey

No.	What does the word “rek” mean according to you?	Does the use of “rek” indicate an identity as <i>Arek Suroboyo</i> ? Explain.	Is the greeting “rek” still relevant for young people in Surabaya in the digital era? Explain.
1	An affix in a sentence, usually used jokingly	Not only Arek Surabaya use it, but it can still function as a marker	Very relevant because it has become a habit and an identity
2	Depends on context; can mean friend or just a casual call	Yes, it shows the distinctiveness of Surabaya speech	Still relevant because it strengthens local identity
3	Friends, guys	Since I am from Sidoarjo near Surabaya, I feel it is identical	Relevant because it shows friendliness
4	A distinctive greeting of Surabaya people	Yes, it reflects local wisdom	It can build emotional connection in digital media
5	A typical informal greeting	Yes, because it reflects Surabaya’s characteristic speech culture	Still relevant to preserve local culture
6	A friendly greeting among friends	Strongly shows the identity of Arek Suroboyo	Still relevant, especially since many local contents use it
7	A informal and distinctive	Yes, the word is already attached to <i>arek-arek Suroboyo</i>	Regional language should continue to be introduced
8	A casual East Javanese language style	Can be yes, depending on the context	Still relevant on youth social media
9	A unique Surabaya slang word	Yes, because it is uncommon in other regions	Very relevant and needs to be preserved
10	A greeting that makes conversations feel friendly	Yes, it supports a Surabaya-like atmosphere	Still suitable in the digital era, strengthening local identity
11	Part of Surabaya accent and speech culture	Yes, a distinctive feature found only in Surabaya	Still used because it feels grounded and casual

#### 4.1 The use of the greeting "rek" appears in the digital interactions of the Suroboyoan community on platform X.

##### Data 1

*“cara sholat di kereta dari stasiun wonokromo gmn ya? takut gak bisa dhuburan rek 🙄”*

In the data above, the greeting "rek" appears at the end of a sentence and is used to signal emotion, closeness, and anxiety shared collectively within the community. The word "rek" does not function as a direct greeting to a specific individual, but rather as a marker of collective (communal) familiarity, reinforcing an empathetic and informal tone.

##### SPEAKING Analysis Elements

S (Setting): Platform X (Twitter); Online public space, midday, approaching the time of the Dhuha prayer

P (Participants): The tweet author (@at266km) and his followers, likely part of the Surabaya digital community

E (Ends): Seeking practical information (how to pray on the train) while expressing anxiety and seeking attention

A (Act Sequence): Question → situation → closing with the greeting "rek" + sad emoji

K (Key): Informal, empathetic tone with a sense of familiarity

I (Instrumentalities) Informal digital writing + emoji 🙄

N (Norms): Typical language style of the Surabaya community; use of "rek" as an expressive enhancer in open conversation

G (Genre): Semi-public personal tweet; minor complaint + request for help + emotional expression

Therefore, in the data above, the greeting "rek" is used as an emotional affirmation at the end of the statement, not as a direct address. Its function is to build a sense of collective closeness with readers, who are assumed to be part of the local community who understand the situation and context (train, Wonokromo station, prayer time). This shows that "rek" is not only used in direct greetings, but also as a marker of social affiliation, indicating that the speaker and recipient share a close identity—namely, that they are both "arek Suroboyo." This greeting appears in open digital interactions as part of a relaxed communication style and cultural solidarity, in keeping with the character of the Suroboyoan community on Platform X.

#### **Data 2**

*"Hallo rekkk yuk yang mau barter kuesioner bisa reply nanti aku dm duluan! Syaratnya cuma mahasiswa aktif yang berkuliah di surabaya yaa."*

In the tweet above, dated May 30, 2025, the greeting "rek" appears in a strengthened form ("rekkk") at the beginning of the sentence as an opening. This greeting serves a pragmatic function as a collective address directed at a specific audience, namely fellow Twitter users assumed to be part of the student community in Surabaya. This greeting is used in an informal context, inviting each other to help fill out the questionnaire, a common practice among students. The use of "rek" here not only creates a sense of familiarity but also clarifies the social segmentation of the message: it is intended only for those who feel relevant by identity and location (active students studying in Surabaya). Using a communication ethnography approach through the SPEAKING model, this context encompasses light interaction genres, participatory norms in online communities, and casual, text-based digital communication instruments. Thus, the greeting "rek" functions as an identity-invoking strategy that implicitly targets local groups and creates social closeness in region-based digital interactions.

#### **Data 3**

*"info cafe buat sby daerah timur dong rek"*

In the tweet above, dated May 8, 2025, the greeting "rek" is used at the end of a sentence requesting information: "info cafe buat sby daerah timur dong rek." This use of the greeting is collective and directed at an audience assumed to be geographically and socially close, namely those who live in or are familiar with the East Surabaya area. In this context, "rek" is not used as a greeting to a specific individual, but rather as a marker of local solidarity that strengthens the social bond between the speaker and recipient. The language style used is casual and open, reflecting the typical interaction norms of the Surabaya digital community, which tend to be egalitarian and participatory. Based on the SPEAKING model, this interaction takes place in an informal and pragmatic genre, with a practical purpose (seeking information), but still containing emotional and cultural nuances through the use of "rek." Therefore, this greeting functions as a binder of regional identity and a trigger for responses from community members who feel they have a shared locality and experience.

#### **Data 9**

*"Halo rek, ada yang lagi cari pekerjaan kah, ada info loker buat guru sd. Reply ya buat info lengkapnya 🙌"*

In a tweet dated April 24, 2025, from the account @muhamadffy, the greeting "rek" appears at the beginning of the sentence as a direct address to the community audience, namely Twitter users assumed to be part of a social network or local community familiar with the greeting. In this context, "rek" is used to open a conversation and draw the reader's attention to the open and social job posting information. The use of this greeting signifies emotional closeness and collective solidarity, as if the speaker is engaging with a group of friends or a community of social equals. Pragmatically, "rek" functions as a spark for an inclusive yet locally oriented interaction. When analyzed using the SPEAKING model, this interaction takes place within the social information genre, with norms of job information exchange based on mutual

cooperation within the online community. Thus, the form and context of the use of "rek" in this tweet demonstrate the greeting's role as a means of social connection and a beacon of cultural identity, strengthening a sense of togetherness among members of the Suroboyoan digital community on platform X.

#### **Data 11**

*"rekkek, ada yang bisa jastip makanan gitu gakk area surabayaa (sukolilo-rungkut) #zonajajan #zonauang":*

In the data above, the word "rekkek" is written with a repeated "k" which gives a casual impression. The greeting "rekkek" is at the beginning of the sentence as a conversation starter, indicating that this tweet is directed at a community or peer group with whom they have a social closeness. The request for food delivery services in this context indicates that the speaker is not only seeking practical assistance but also hoping for a response from those who feel they are part of the same social circle. The use of this greeting demonstrates that "rek" functions not simply as a greeting but also as a tool to create closeness, establish an informal atmosphere, and emphasize local identity in everyday interactions in the digital space. In other words, "rek" here becomes a communication bridge that feels light but contains the meaning of togetherness typical of Arek Suroboyo.

### **4.2 The Greeting "Rek" as a Marker of Arek Suroboyo Identity in Digital Communication**

#### **Data 5**

*"hallo rek ada yang minat buat isiin kuesioner ku gak yaa, masih butuh 30 an lagi. kriterianya: dom surabaya - penonton drama korea..."*

The above data was collected from digital communication within the Suroboyoan Community. The greeting "rek" functions not only as an informal language element but also as a marker of cultural identity. The tweet "Hello, is anyone interested in filling out my questionnaire?" uses "rek" as a familiar and egalitarian form of collective greeting. Although the context is functional, inviting people to fill out the questionnaire, this typical Surabaya greeting indicates that the interaction is directed at fellow Arek Suroboyo or those who feel part of the local community. This phenomenon is reinforced by survey results showing that 100% of respondents were in the young age range (21–30 years old), with a majority of 8 out of 11 respondents admitting to frequently using the greeting "rek." Eight respondents considered "rek" to be a very distinctive form and reflect the identity of Arek Suroboyo (People of Surabaya). From the qualitative data collected in the survey, many respondents stated that "rek" is part of an informal style of language that not only fosters closeness but also reflects Surabaya's distinctive spoken culture. Most agreed that "rek" demonstrates Surabayan identity, particularly because the greeting is uncommon outside of Surabaya and holds symbolic power as a representation of local wisdom. It can be seen that "rek" functions as a linguistic index that marks social affiliation and regional identity. It can implicitly access elements of regionalism, closeness, and local pride every time it is used in digital interactions. Therefore, the use of "rek" not only maintains the existence of regional languages online but also becomes part of the social identity strategy of Surabaya's younger generation in building connections and self-expression on social media.

#### **Data 16**

*"rekkek adakah besok yg mau ke job fair sby? mau cari barengan ehehe 🤔👉"*

The data above shows the use of the greeting "rekkek" as a friendly and warm opening. In this context, "rekkek" functions not only as an informal greeting but also as a marker of membership in the local community. The speaker implicitly targets an audience who lives in Surabaya or is familiar with Surabayan culture, given that the context is an invitation to go with them to the Surabaya job fair. This suggests that

"rek" activates a sense of community based on local identity and shared experiences as Arek Suroboyo (People of Surabaya).

The survey results are consistent with the finding that 63.6% of respondents use "rek" in the context of greeting friends or joking around. Furthermore, 45.5% stated that they use "rek" as a marker of local identity. The perception table shows that the majority of respondents associate the greeting "rek" with the familiar, relaxed atmosphere of Surabaya, which is closely linked to the speech culture of the younger generation. The greeting "rek" in this tweet serves as a linguistic index, suggesting that the speaker and audience belong to the same social and cultural group within the Surabayan community. Thus, "rek" in this tweet is not simply a linguistic element, but a representation of social identity actively formed and negotiated through digital communication.

#### **Data 24**

*"rek mau tanya, tempat beli raket tenis di surabaya dimana ya? tolong info anak rantau ini 🙄"*

The data above shows the greeting "rek" as a sentence opener directed at an online community with the same regional affiliation. Although the speaker refers to himself as "anak rantau," the use of this typical Surabaya greeting indicates that he is adapting and attempting to assimilate with the local community, namely Surabaya residents or those familiar with their linguistic culture. In this context, "rek" is used not only as a greeting but also as a social identity strategy, indicating that the speaker wants to demonstrate emotional closeness and symbolic solidarity with the Surabayan community, despite not being a native.

The tweet above is relevant to the survey results, which showed that 8 out of 11 respondents stated that the greeting "rek" is very distinctive and part of the Arek Suroboyo linguistic identity. Several survey respondents stated that the use of "rek" can be a marker of inclusive cultural identity, as long as it is used in the right context. The greeting "rek" in this tweet becomes a performative index, where someone who is not originally part of the group uses the linguistic symbols of the group to negotiate social affiliation and demonstrate a desire to connect. This reinforces the idea that in the Suroboyoan Community on Platform X, the greeting "rek" functions not only as a communication tool, but also as a social symbol that indexes a sense of membership, cultural attachment, and local Surabaya-ness.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this study found that the greeting "rek" within the Suroboyoan Community on platform X is actively used in various forms and contexts of communication. Based on tweet data analysis using SPEAKING theory, "rek" is used as an opening greeting, a collective invitation, an expression of familiarity, and even an emotional marker in informal and light-hearted online conversations. The use of "rek" is not simply a casual greeting, but rather part of a language practice that reflects the distinctive communication patterns of the Surabaya community in the digital space. Through observation and documentation of tweets, it is clear that this greeting is used to build social closeness, strengthen group solidarity, and mark interactions between local community members on social media platforms.

The survey results also confirm that "rek" is understood as a marker of Arek Suroboyo identity that remains relevant among the younger generation. Most respondents associate "rek" with familiarity, distinctive Surabayan speech, and down-to-earth local expressions. Using indexicality theory, it can be concluded that "rek" functions as a linguistic symbol that indexes social membership, cultural closeness, and cultural identity. The use of this greeting not only maintains the existence of local languages in the digital space, but also becomes a medium to represent and maintain the linguistic identity of the people of Surabaya amidst the uniform flow of global communication.

#### **Ethical Approval**

Not applicable.

### **Informed Consent Statement**

Not applicable.

### **Disclosure statement**

The Authors declare no conflict of interest.

### **Data Availability Statement**

The data presented in this research are available on request from the corresponding author due to privacy reasons.

### **Funding**

This research received no external funding.

### **Notes on Contribution**

#### **Nur Azizah Hitakumala**

<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-2602-466X>

Nur Azizah Hitakumala is affiliated with Universitas Airlangga

### **REFERENCES**

- Alfian, R. L., Warto, Fauziah, N. M., & Widyaningsih, R. (2025). The digital village initiative and construction of social identity in rural communities. *Jurnal Antropologi: Isu Isu Sosial Budaya*, 01(01), 27–36.
- Arya, E. (2024). Social media's role in shifting cultures: From collective roots to individual branches. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4785094>
- Doreleijers, K., & Swanenberg, J. (2023). Putting local dialect in the mix: Indexicality and stylization in a TikTok challenge. *Language and Communication*, 92(June), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2023.06.002>
- Hymes, D. (1972). *Models of the interaction of language and social life*. In J. J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (Eds.), *Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication* (pp. 35–71). New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Malik, Z., & Haidar, S. (2023). Online community development through social interaction — K-Pop stan twitter as a community of practice. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 31(2), 733–751. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2020.1805773>
- Mei, Z. (2024). Dialect inheritance and youth identity: an online ethnography study on dialect enthusiasts community on the new media platforms. *Frontiers in Communication*, 9(September), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2024.1464284>
- Nurwahid, A. F., Safira, C., & Wibowo, E. F. K. (2024). 'Bad word' for good engagement: The commodification of 'the suroboyoan language' in Indonesian local television newsroom. <https://doi.org/10.26650/CONNECTIST2024-1512951>
- Rani, A. S. (2025). Studi etnografi virtual interaksi pengikut @HaveAniesDay di media sosial x. *IIP (Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan)*, 8(3), 2442–2447.
- Rosyadi, M. (2024). Membangun komunitas online : Studi etnografi digital tentang dinamika kelompok di platform whatsapp. *KOMUNIKA (Jurnal Ilmiah Komunikasi)*, 2(1), 21–27.
- Silverstein, M. (1976). Shifters, linguistic categories, and cultural description. In K. H. Basso & H. A. Selby (Eds.), *Meaning in anthropology* (pp. 11–55). Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Varghese, D., & Ranganathan, S. (2022). From texts to contexts: the relevance of digital ethnography in a Foucauldian discourse analysis of online gender talk in Kerala. *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society*, 20(4), 516–530. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JICES-01-2022-0001>
- Yang, H., & Fatimah, T. S. (2024). Social identity construction in digital communities : A case study on

social media users in indonesia. *International Journal of Psychology and Health Science*, 1(4), 221–227.

Yolanda, A., Andary, R. W., Tamsil, I. S., Zaman, K., & Wei, S. (2025). The Role of Social Media in the Formation of Global Cultural Identity. *Journal of Social Science Utilizing Technology*, 3(1), 10–18.